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The Rez Sisters Worksheet

1. Reflect on the importance of the character (spirit?) not seen by all the characters but seen by only one or a few of the characters and discuss that character's importance to the dramatic action and the development of the plot.

Nanabush is commonly known to be as a Trickster. He can assume any guise he desires, and he toes the line between that of man and that of God. In the play, he only comes out when a heavy truth is about to be revealed to the audience that further develops the character revealing that truth. For example, he appears as a seagull and is spoken to by Zhaboonigan when she notices him, and she reveals her childhood memory of being raped by two white men in a van by a screwdriver before being dumped off in the bushes naked and alone. It really gives insight to Zhaboonigan's character, especially with the meaning of her name being "needle." One of his guises in the play is the Bingo Master who brings the play to a dramatic high when he starts to the bingo game. The ladies get revved up to the point they start screaming over B14 as the Bingo Master continues to dole out numbers. They end up throwing the bingo machine outside, but it was too late anyways as Marie-Adele waltzes into the arms of the Bingo Master and he whispers "Bingo" into her ear and carries her away as Nighthawk. Marie-Adele's funeral was not long after. Nanabush pushes the plot forward by being the catalyst for dramatic action and foretelling a character's nature.

2. Compare the aspirations and socio-economic level of the characters in this play with those in Wedding Band, Queen's Garden, and Real Women.

The women in all three plays want something *more* than what their current lifestyle is offering to them. They want something beyond their barriers-- Julia from Wedding Band wants to be in New York, Brenda (Queen's Garden) and Anna (Real Women) want to go to college far from the eyes of their watchful parents, and Pelajia wants to go to Toronto. They all want to spread their wings and fly somewhere where they can be themselves without the overbearing influence of others and their current environment's circumstances. The socio-economic level of these women are more or less the same. They all do not live lavishly at all and all work to make a buck for the family. They all experience similar levels of oppression women do tend to feel and that's what unite these characters. However, what's notably different about Rez Sisters that the other plays do not have is the unity of the women. Real Women does touch on it a bit with how all the employees band together to make quick work of the tall orders, but the Rez Sisters are all bonded to each other by blood of any quantity and work fast and hard to make the money they need to go to the biggest bingo competition. They also all stay together in the end unlike the women in the other plays who do go their separate ways.

3. Compare the role of women and the depiction of men in this play with that in Real Women Have Curves.

Men in both of these plays take a backseat, as in they're not heavily featured with

lines, but they are talked about quite frequently. However, both of these plays do not speak about men in a positive light at all. They're seen as incompetent or only think with their crotch, not with their brain. They're portrayed as predators. In Real Women, a man that's talked about often is El Tormentor who is seen as this nasty man who only wants to have sex. Not only that, it seems that the women cannot feel beautiful in their own skin because of the standards men has placed upon them on what is beautiful or not based on whether or not they will date them.

In Rez Sisters, the only men featured are the incompetent Chief who cannot get the people what he has promised, such as paved roads, and Big Joey, who seems to only be brought up when his affairs are. Other men mentioned are Eugene, Emily's abusive partner, and the two white men who raped Zhaboonigan. Men in this play are not portrayed in any favorable light at all. Nanabush is the only male character who is more on the ambivalent side, he dances merrily on rooftops and does not seem to really have an out for any of the female characters.

None of the men in both plays really speak at all. They're all spoken of instead. We find out about them through the words of the women in the play which really reduces the role of men. The women in the plays, however, are portrayed to be kooky but strong and united. They all band together in order to make their goals come true such as the sewing workers getting together to finish the dresses on time and the Native women working the registers, holding bake sales and garage sales, doing all these miscellaneous jobs to make a buck for the world's biggest bingo competition.